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## Strategic Issue Priorities 1999

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At its September 17, 1999 meeting, the Legislative Council reviewed the strategic issues identified at the August planning session and decided to actively address the top three priorities. The Council also took the first steps in identifying strategies to address the issues. The issues are presented in priority order below:

### Priority 1

1. ***What*** is the issue?

How can the council educate the public about the legislative process?

2. ***Why*** is this an issue?

The public doesn't understand how budgeting process works, what term limits mean, don't trust government or their legislature. Term limits offers timing that creates an impetus to make more effort in this area. It is one of the Council's specific mission statements, but one which is not performed.

3. ***What are the consequences*** of not addressing this issue?

Further distrust of government; less understanding of and support for government; system doesn't work because fewer people want to serve and don't get supported when they do serve.

A less informed public, misunderstanding about the process, resulting in less public confidence and perhaps less legislative implementation of the public interest.

4. ***How*** will the Council develop strategies for this issue? The Council has authorized appointment of a subcommittee to undertake a study of televising legislative proceedings that will also undertake this task.

## Priority 2

1. ***What*** is the issue?

Can the council develop a training program for new legislators to prepare for session and for constituent services? Because of term limits, how can new members be educated?

2. ***Why*** is this an issue?

There is a need to get legislators on board as fast as possible, especially with term limits. The Council's leadership mission aimed at efficient operation and improvement of the branch combines with threats of expanding power in executive and lobbying areas.

3. ***What are the consequences*** of not addressing this issue?

Legislators not trained and knowledgeable about system. Balance between the 3 branches of government. [Note: in discussing this issue, the Boys' State training model was mentioned and could be a part of a strategy to address this issue.] Loss of an opportunity for Council effectiveness and erosion of legislator effectiveness in the constituent service (representational) aspects of the legislator's role.

4. ***How*** will the Council develop strategies for this issue? The Council asked staff to develop a report detailing legislator training approaches taken in the past and in other states. This information will be used to design programs to develop strategies to help develop legislator skills more quickly.

## Priority 3

1. ***What*** is the issue?

How can the council promote more interaction with legislators from other states?

2. ***Why*** is this an issue?

In our fast changing world, we as a state need to be more involved. The lack of resources to participate in national organizations has limited opportunities.

3. ***What are the consequences*** of not addressing this issue?

Isolation from national and global ideas and abilities.

4. ***How*** will the Council develop strategies for this issue? The Council as a whole will continue to educate itself on opportunities for interaction with other states and support Montana participation in organizations that foster interstate communication through active budget development and support activities.

Priority 4 (tie)

1. <b><i>What</i></b> is the issue? How can the council prepare for better security in the Capitol?
2. <b><i>Why</i></b> is this an issue? The Council has a leadership role with respect to planning and space allocation in the Capitol as well as an inherent interest in the safety of the public, employees, and elected officials using the Capitol. Capitol remodeling offers an opportunity to address this issue, which seems to be growing in importance as the disaffected few have with growing frequency threatened, and in some cases taken, direct action in support of their claims of disaffection.
3. <b><i>What</i></b> are the <b><i>consequences</i></b> of not addressing this issue? Potential loss of life and property at the Capitol accompanied by critical notice of prior inaction.
4. <b><i>How</i></b> will the Council develop strategies for this issue? The Council will continue to review security measures being installed as a part of Capitol renovation and follow up with issues related to cultural acceptance of security.

Priority 4 (tie)

1. <b><i>What</i></b> is the issue? How can technology better serve the legislative process?
2. <b><i>Why</i></b> is this an issue? Legislators need better ability to access information flow in an efficient way and to cut paper trail.
3. <b><i>What</i></b> are the <b><i>consequences</i></b> of not addressing this issue? Information overload leading to ineffective use of information.
4. <b><i>How</i></b> will the Council develop strategies for this issue? The Council recognizes its role in approving the technology plan for the Branch and will operate through that mechanism to approve and support strategies in this area.

Priority 5

<p>1. <b><i>What</i></b> is the issue?</p> <p>What must we do to facilitate merit pay system in LSD?</p>
<p>2. <b><i>Why</i></b> is this an issue?</p> <p>In exercising its duty to establish pay policy in the Legislative Branch, the Council has adopted a policy that was identified as a strength in that implementation of merit pay will equalize pay among legislative branch employees while discussion indicated how policy established by the Legislature through the appropriation process operates as a counter force to full implementation.</p>
<p>3. <b><i>What are the consequences</i></b> of not addressing this issue?</p> <p>Failure to achieve the perceived benefits of the adopted policy as stated in the NCSL recommendations in favor of the merit pay proposal; lack of consistency or equity in the Branch.</p>
<p>4. <b><i>How</i></b> will the Council develop strategies for this issue? The Council recognized that the Executive Director, Legislative Fiscal Analyst, and Legislative Auditor have agreed to work on this problem independently and will respond to initiatives brought forward by them.</p>

Priority 6 (tie)

<p>1. <b><i>What</i></b> is the issue?</p> <p>Do we need a top down organizational structure within the branch? Do we need an interim body with legislative authority with respect to internal management?</p>
<p>2. <b><i>Why</i></b> is this an issue?</p> <p>Efficient operation and improvement of the Branch is key to the Council mission and the complex organizational matrix of the Legislative Branch causes recurring concern with respect to its apparent inefficiency -- a matter not routinely seen in more traditional organizational structures.</p>
<p>3. <b><i>What are the consequences</i></b> of not addressing this issue?</p> <p>A legislative branch less efficient and less able to respond to change than would otherwise be possible.</p>
<p>4. <b><i>How</i></b> will the Council develop strategies for this issue? The Personnel Subcommittee is addressing this issue as a part of the review of hiring a new Executive Director. The Council will rely on recommendations of that subcommittee, but recognizes this as an otherwise low priority.</p>

Priority 6 (tie)

1. ***What is the issue?***

How can the council promote sound management in the senate and house yet recognize the political nature of these bodies?

2. ***Why is this an issue?***

With term limits, there is a recognition that legislative leaders will have less background and experience on average than has been true in the past. There is a great amount of administrative work done on behalf of the legislature by people traditionally in patronage positions that really is substantively the same -- and has the same effect, positive or negative, on the legislature regardless which party is in the majority. Still, there is close liaison between the key staff people and legislative leadership that implies trust or even support on a political level.

3. ***What are the consequences of not addressing this issue?***

Possible inefficiency or failure of the legislative process at a policy level due to deficiencies in internal management of information management, document flow management, and personnel management due to inexperience or lack of training among key House and Senate staff.

4. ***How will the Council develop strategies for this issue?*** This issue will not be addressed by the Legislative Council.

Priority 6 (tie)

1. ***What is the issue?***

How can the Council take a more active role in budget development and adoption to support council priorities?

2. ***Why is this an issue?***

While the Council recognizes a strength in its traditional frugality, there is also a recognition that lack of funding resources has limited its ability to fulfill its mission and mandates fully in a number of areas including interstate and international cooperation, legislator education, and the like. The Council must assume its full leadership role in relation to budget development and support to address this issue.

3. ***What are the consequences of not addressing this issue?***

Continued weakness and lack of full accomplishment of Council mission and mandates.

4. ***How will the Council develop strategies for this issue?*** This is a normal Council responsibility, which will be recognized and seriously pursued. It will not be separately addressed as a strategic matter.

Priority 7

1. ***What*** is the issue?

How can the council make a smooth transition when key staff leave?

2. ***Why*** is this an issue?

While the Council recognized a strength deriving from the strong nonpartisan, capable staff, it also recognized a corollary weakness in its strong dependence on key staff. The potential loss of key staff would thus jeopardize accomplishment of the Council mission in a number of ways.

3. ***What*** are the ***consequences*** of not addressing this issue?

Inability of the Council or Legislative Services to accomplish their missions effectively and efficiently.

4. ***How*** will the Council develop strategies for this issue? This issue will not be addressed by the Legislative Council as a separate matter.